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# THREE NOTICES

OF THE

## “SPEAKER’S COMMENTARY,”

FROM THE DUTCH OF DR A. KUENEN,  
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PUBLISHED BY THOMAS SCOTT,  
NO. 11, THE TERRACE, FARQUHAR ROAD,  
UPPER NORWOOD, LONDON, S.E.

*Price Sixpence.*

## MOTTOES OF THE CONSERVATIVE THEOLOGIAN.

Πλήν γε δὴ ὅτι οὐκ ἀκριβῆ ἐξεταστὴν χρὴ εἶναι τῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ θείου ἐκ παλαιοῦ μεμνημένων. τὰ γὰρ τοι κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ξυντι-θέντι οὐ πιστά, ἐπειδὴν τὸ θεῖον τις προσθῆ τῷ λόγῳ, οὐ πάντη ἀπιστα φαίνεται.—Arrian, *Anabasis*, v. 1, 2.

“But only, one should not scrutinize too rigorously the stories which have been handed down from ancient times regarding what is divine. For things which, judged by the test of probability, are not credible, appear to be not altogether incredible when their divine element is taken into account.”

οὐδὲν σοφίζομεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσι.  
πατρίους παραδοχὰς, ἅς θ' ὀμηλικὰς χρόνῳ  
κεκτήμεθ', οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος,  
οὐδ' εἰ δὲ ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν εὐρήται φρενῶν.

Euripides, *Bacchæ*, vv. 200ff.

“We never rationalize about the gods. No reasoning can overthrow the hereditary traditions which we hold, and which are as old as time itself,—not even although the ingenious arguments have been discovered by the subtlest wits.”

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## REPLIES OF THE UNBIASSED SEARCHER AFTER TRUTH.

σώφρονος δ' ἀπιστίας  
οὐκ ἔστω οὐδὲν χρησιμώτερον βροτοῖς.

Euripides, *Helena*, vv. 1617ff.

“Nothing is more profitable to mortals than a prudent distrust.”

πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε, τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε.

1 Thess. 5. 21.

“But prove all things : hold fast that which is good.”

ἀλλὰ μοι ψεύδος τε ξυγχωρῆσαι καὶ ἀληθὲς ἀφανίσαι οὐδαμῶς θέμις.

Plato, *Theætetus*, p. 151.

“But for me,” said Socrates, “it is by no means lawful to admit falsehood and suppress truth.”

## THREE NOTICES OF THE "SPEAKER'S COMMENTARY."

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THE three volumes of the "Speaker's Commentary," (of which the proper title is "The Holy Bible, according to the authorized version, with an explanatory and critical commentary, by Bishops and other clergy of the Anglican Church; edited by F. C. Cook, Canon of Exeter." London: Murray,) form the subject of three notices from the pen of the eminent Hebrew scholar and critic, Professor A. Kuenen, of Leyden, in Holland, which have appeared in the Dutch theological journal (*Theologisch Tijdschrift*) in January 1872, and May and September 1873. The essential parts of these articles, as translated from the original, with the sanction of the author, are as follows.\*

### VOLUME I.

The circumstances which led to the composition and publication of this work are well known. The minds of many persons were disquieted by the "Essays and Reviews," and by the critical investigations of Bishop Colenso. The idea occurred to the Speaker of the House of Commons that the difficulties which had been raised in regard to the Bible, should be answered by

\* Professor Kuenen wishes it to be understood that his notices were contributed to a scientific journal, and written principally for theologians. Had they been composed for the perusal of the general public in England, they would probably have been somewhat fuller, and more popular in their character.

the Church in a sufficient manner. He entered into consultation with the Bishops, and received from them the desired support. A commission was formed, which divided the entire Bible into eight sections, and for each section chose the scholars who were most competent to handle it. The editorship of the whole work was entrusted to the Rev. Mr Cook, who, as often as he deems it necessary, is assisted by the Archbishop of York, and the Regius Professors of Theology at Oxford and Cambridge. The first portion has now been published in two parts, which embrace the entire Pentateuch. The contributors to this are, Dr Harold Browne, Bishop of Ely, (General Introduction, Introduction to, and Commentary on, Genesis); the editor, Canon Cook, (Introduction to Exodus; Explanation of Exodus i-xix.; Excursuses on the march to Sinai, on the Pentateuch and Egyptian History, on Egyptian words in the Pentateuch); the Rev. Mr Clark, (Explanation of Exodus xx-xl., and Leviticus, besides an Introduction to this book); the Rev. Mr Espin, (Introduction to, and Explanation of, Numbers and Deuteronomy). The arrangement of the work is this: under the text of the common translation are printed the notes, in which also the improvements in the translation are introduced; whilst the more extensive notes on disputed or important points are placed at the end of the chapters to which they belong, and are separately referred to in the index. The whole work has a princely appearance; paper and print are excellent; the two parts, making in all 928 pages, form two handsome volumes: illustrative woodcuts, too, are not wanting.

Much, indeed very much, is to be learned from this book, especially by laymen, for whose benefit it was written. Most of the composers of it are learned men, well up to the level of their task. The editor, Mr Cook, possesses great knowledge of Egyptian matters, and is perfectly familiar with the most recent geographical researches in the Peninsula of Sinai.

Messrs Clark and Espin have, in general, shown a broad and able apprehension of the work they had to do. But they lack one thing, and that vitiates the whole. They are not free. The apologetic aim of the work is never lost sight of; and constantly operates to disturb the course of the enquiry. It is, in one word, science such as serves a purpose that is here put before us. The writers place themselves in opposition to the critics of the Pentateuch, depreciate their arguments, make sport, in the well-known childish manner, of their mutual differences, and try to refute them with proofs and reasonings which they themselves, in any other case, would reject as utterly insufficient, or regard as unworthy of notice. None of them sins in this respect so naively and so grossly (*sterk*) as Dr Harold Browne, the Bishop of Ely. Indeed, it was no easy task which he had undertaken, the Introduction to the entire Pentateuch and to Genesis, and the explanation of that book. But they are miserable demonstrations and farfetched and unnatural suppositions to which he treats us.\* As examples, I note his reasoning (pp. 4-15) to prove that the history of the post-Mosaic period presupposes the existence of the Pentateuch; his observations (pp. 24-29) on the names of God in Genesis; his notes on the days of the creation (p. 36), on the genealogies in the fifth and eleventh chapters of Genesis (p. 64), on the chronology of Jacob's life (pp. 177 ff.) In this last note Dr Browne does not hesitate to cook up again an almost forgotten conjecture of Kennicot's, and distinguish the twenty years in Genesis xxxi. 41, from those in verse 38, and thus to lengthen Jacob's sojourn in Haran to that extent! This one instance shows better than a long demonstration how greatly dogmatical considerations have clouded soundness of understanding and exegetical perception in the case of this apologist. On fitting occasions his fellow-labourers do not fall short

\* See the note in p. 28.

of him in this respect. Thus, for example, the excursus of Mr Clark on the Tabernacle (pp. 474-79), based on the investigations of Mr Ferguson, is an almost amusing proof how the apologetic art, with the best intentions and brilliant results, does violence to the text of Scripture; here, in fact, a very handsome edifice is constructed and delineated, which, however, alas! does not at all correspond with the description in Exodus xxvi. And yet the notes of the same writer, on Exodus xx. (pp. 335 ff.), and on Exodus xxviii. 30, on the Urim and Thummim, prove that he is a man with a clear head, to whom only one thing is wanting, viz., that he dare not overpass certain fixed limits—at least entirely—for he really sets one foot across them. Or can the position he maintains, that in Exodus xx. and Deuteronomy v., we have before us not the original Decalogue, but two expansions of one original, be consistent with the ecclesiastical doctrine of inspiration?

But I must not expatiate further, partly because it is not my object to take this opportunity of vindicating anew the rights of modern criticism, and partly because I wish to draw attention to the English reviewers of the 'Speaker's Commentary.' Most of the reviewing periodicals have already pronounced their opinions upon it. They are, as was to be expected, more or less favourable. But even the most favourable notices are not composed in the tone of triumph which should have been employed if the 'adverse critics' had indeed been defeated. If I am not deceived, this Commentary, entirely against the intentions of those who planned it, will before all things have this result, that the intelligent public will begin to look upon critical questions as open questions, in the discussion of which the learned will still have a good deal to do. The maxim *nil scire tutissima fides* is applicable to this case also. The 'believer' feels himself strong so long as he thinks that Satan and his satellites are fighting against his belief. But when he observes that it is assailed and defended, and

even very badly defended, with human arguments, he becomes less at ease. I should be very much surprised if, after the lapse of some years, it did not appear that the 'Speaker's Commentary' had powerfully co-operated to make criticism indigenous in England.

First of all, this work already exercises influence in this direction through the reply which it has called forth. Dr Colenso has recently given to the world the first part of his work, 'The New Bible Commentary—critically examined.' It is occupied with the portion contributed by Dr Harold Browne to the new Commentary, and adduces formidable objections against it. Colenso follows the Bishop of Ely step by step, and exposes the weakness and incorrectness of his criticism and exegesis pitilessly and often strikingly. This examination is not exactly an entertaining piece of reading. One would have asked any other writer why he did not rather omit many details, and show, by some clear proofs, the wrongness of Dr Browne's method. Such an essay would certainly have been more instructive for the general public. But Dr Colenso has evidently, and not without reason, thought that he was not at liberty to pass over a single note, and that he must avoid even the appearance of failing in any instance to supply the necessary answer. The succeeding parts of his reply I propose to take up along with the sixth part of his work on the Pentateuch, which is soon to appear."—(*Theologisch Tijdschrift for January 1872*).

## VOLUME II.

The second volume contains the explanation of the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, first and second Samuel, and first Kings. Of the contributors to vol. I., we meet here only with Mr Espin, who has charged himself with the treatment of Joshua. The following four books are explained by Lord Hervey, Bishop of Bath

and Wells; and first and second Kings are entrusted to Professor G. Rawlinson, the well-known editor of Herodotus, and author of "The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World."

When, after reading the introductions to the several books, and the notes on the most important passages, I reflect how much time, labour, and money, have been expended on the writing and printing of this work, I receive a painful impression. Here learned theologians, and such, too, as are high dignitaries, come forward to instruct the educated participators in their religious belief; and all that these learn from them they must afterwards unlearn. It is a matter of course that in this commentary many faults in the 'authorised version' are amended, and many points of an archæological and geographical nature are correctly illustrated. But that is not the question, when we are judging a work like this. The point of importance here is, whether the contributors to the work make their learning subservient to the diffusion of a sound method of regarding and estimating the Bible. The reverse is the fact. Filled with reverence for "God's Holy Word," afraid of every thing that appears to do it injustice, apprehensive of the consequences which in their opinion every deviation from tradition must draw after it, they regard it as a sacred duty to maintain that which appears to them to be the sound view, and to reject all more reasonable conceptions as "unbelieving" and "sacrilegious." Now and then the truth is too powerful for them, and they have found themselves forced to give up the correctness of the Biblical narrative or the complete harmony of its parts. But when they communicate this to their readers, the thing is done in such a way that the belief in the infallibility of the Word of God is weakened as little as possible, or not at all. The deviations which they allow themselves, even those of the most consequence, are described as unimportant, so that the reader receives the impression that really everything



continues on the old footing. The concessions, however, form the exception. As a rule, the traditional view is in fact maintained, even in cases where it may be said to be absolutely untenable: and then the difficulties are either passed over in silence, or are not recognized in their real force, or are answered with childish arguments. Of course, no one who has once obtained an insight into the actual state of the questions at issue, will for a moment be shaken in his convictions by anything that is thus urged. But the portion of the public which is conservatively disposed is fortified in its prejudices by such guides as these. The hindrance which they occasion by their struggles can, it is true, only be temporary. It will one day become manifest to every one that the free, the strictly critical, treatment of the Old Testament is the only true one, and at the same time the only one which renders full justice to the religion of Israel, and either entirely removes, or confines within their proper limits, the difficulties which are alleged against it. That which the "adverse critics" now already know, must one day become clear to all, that fearless criticism, and this alone, opens up an access to Israel's sanctuaries. *Magna est veritas et prævalebit*. But, nevertheless, it is much to be lamented that the dignitaries of the Anglican Church should make use of their influence to oppose the general recognition of this truth, and waste their powers in throwing up obstacles which, for the present generation at least, will prove insurmountable.

But even the appearance of boasting must be avoided. And therefore I must not omit in some measure to justify my judgment. For this purpose some specimens, a few handfuls out of an ample store, will more than suffice.

The extermination of the Canaanites is discussed in section seventh of the introduction to Joshua (pp. 13-16). Mr Espin here proceeds upon the supposition that this "destruction" is a fact. Are, then, the numerous

proofs of the contrary unknown to him? No; he allows them a certain weight. "Ewald's idea," as he writes in p. 12, "that the early campaigns of Joshua were in the nature of sudden raids, overpowering for the moment all opposition, but not effectually subduing the country, has probably much truth in it." Nevertheless, we do not perceive how this is to be reconciled with the recognition of the credibility of Joshua x. 26-43, xi. 10-23, where just the contrary is taught. The concession to Ewald stands there as the simplest and most innocent thing in the world, and has then no further consequences. In section seven, it is Joshua who destroys the Canaanites. And this procedure, now, is defended as worthy of God! It can be fully justified, in its relation both to the Canaanites and to Israel, and to the rest of mankind. For the Canaanites are described as incarnate devils, who wilfully persevered in idolatry and immorality, in spite of God's warnings in the deluge, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorra, in spite of the examples set them by the patriarchs. As regards the Israelites, must not God's command\* to

\* [The Old Testament writers who ascribe these commands to the Almighty, even although they knew that, at the time when they wrote, these injunctions could no longer be carried into effect, can hardly escape the charge of inhumanity, and of conceiving their Creator to be "altogether such an one as themselves" (Ps. L. 21); and to them may be applied the words in which Iphigeneia charges the Taurians with imputing their own bloodthirsty disposition to the goddess Diana, to whom they sacrificed all the foreigners who landed in their country:—

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν

τὰ Ταντάλου θεοῖσιν ἐστιάματα  
 ἄπιστα κρίνω, παῖδός ἡσθῆναι βορᾶ,  
 τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ', αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους,  
 ἐς τὸν θεὸν τὸ φᾶνλον ἀναφέρειω δοκῶ.  
 οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαίμωνων εἶναι κακόν.

—*Euripides, Iph. in Tauris*, vv. 386 ff.

"I indeed regard the Tantalean banquet offered to the gods as incredible—that they should be pleased with feasting upon

exterminate the inhabitants of Canaan have had the effect of rendering them cruel and bloodthirsty? O no! "No body of men ever acquired, or would be likely to acquire, a relish for human slaughter, by being constrained to put to the sword, in cold blood, all the inhabitants of a country, city after city, even when, as must many times have been the case in Joshua's campaigns, no resistance had been, or could be, attempted." Mr Espin, truly, speaks—and here I have quoted literally, since otherwise I might easily have been charged with exaggeration,—as if any thing were known to him of the influence which such murdering in cold blood would exercise! He adds, that the war of extermination against the Canaanites was absolutely necessary to inspire the people of Israel with aversion to the sins of these races. But did Israel, then, learn this aversion by its supposed work of butchery? What becomes of the accounts in the book of Judges of this people's repeated falling away from Jehovah? The entire reasoning of Mr Espin is out and out unreal. But on another account, also, it makes a painful impression. However well meant, it tends in reality to the recommendation of a morality above which Christians, Mr Espin himself not excepted, are happily far elevated. And this morality it ascribes to God, to Him whom Jesus has preached to us as the Father of the whole of mankind. In truth, we are fully justified in protesting, in the name of religion, against dogmatic principles which lead to such consequences.

But how much soever Mr Espin can digest, the miracle of the sun and moon standing still (Joshua x. 12-15,) is too strong for him. Some years ago, M. Baumgarten wrote, that since Joshua's bold prayer was sealed by

a boy. But I think that the men of this country, being themselves homicidal, have imputed the same wickedness to the goddess; for I do not conceive that any of the deities is evil."

Compare the Bishop of Natal's Lectures on the Pentateuch, p. 217.—J. M.]

Jehovah's act and word, nothing remained for us but simply to believe that such an event had actually happened ("so ist es an uns dasz solches geschehen einfach zu glauben.")\* This belief is all too huge for the English expositor, and there is none of us who will deal hardly with him on that account. But, the credibility of Joshua must not be endangered! The reader is, therefore, informed (p. 57, f.) that the interpretation of Joshua x. 12, 13,\* as a poetical hyperbole is maintained not only by Maurer, Ewald, and Von Lengerke, but also "what is more important," is regarded as admissible by such men as Hengstenberg, Keil, and Kurtz, "theologians whose orthodoxy upon the plenary inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture is well-known and undoubted." So much, preliminarily, by way of tranquillizing the reader's mind! After this the pruning-knife is taken in hand, and the entire paragraph,—verses 12-15,—is lopped off as an interpolation. It is "a fragment of unknown date and uncertain authorship, interpolated in the text of the narrative, the continuity of which is broken by the intrusion." (p. 56).† Now everything is in order. We are freed from the miracle,—which, nevertheless, would very well admit of being vindicated—and have placed the writer of Joshua in safety; he could not, in truth, prevent another person from interpolating his narrative!

We have just spoken of the conquest of the whole of Canaan, and the extermination of all the inhabitants

\* Herzog's Real Encyclopædie, vol. vii. 40.

† [It is but proper to add, however, that in Bunsen's Bibelwerk, which is by no means an orthodox book, these verses are spoken of as "forming an inserted (eingelegte) passage, with a fragment from a collection of songs called 'The Book of the Righteous,' and which is only once again quoted in 2 Samuel i. 18. Probably the national heroes in particular were there celebrated. The original sense of our passage can thus be poetically understood; and so all the lies and dreams built upon it, together with the persecution of honest science based thereon, fall away of themselves."—J. M.]

by, or in the time of, Joshua. It appeared that Mr Espin does not understand too rigorously the very positive declarations on that subject, in the book of Joshua, and so can, in some degree at least, do justice to the conflicting accounts both in Joshua itself and in Judges. In passing, he recognizes, in reference thereto, that in Judges, first chapter, events belonging to the period after Joshua's death are related. The Bishop of Bath and Wells could, however, have instructed him better on that point. From him, we learn (pp. 123-125) that it was in Joshua's lifetime that the tribes made the conquests which are there ascribed to them. Rarely has a statement fallen under my observation in which things were represented in so distorted a shape, or brought into relation with each other in a more wonderful manner. The matter is otherwise simple enough. The compiler of Judges himself takes up the story at chap. ii. 6, connects his narrative with Joshua xxiv., and shows the reader the point of view from which he should regard the history of the period of the Judges. Or, to express the matter otherwise, chapters ii. 6 to iii. 5 form the introduction, from the compiler's own pen, to the book of Judges. That which precedes, chapter i. 1 to ii. 6, is taken by him from some other source,—perhaps from the same document as chapters xvii. to xxi., (compare Lord Hervey himself, pp. 117, 125,)—and placed there in order that the passage may serve to illustrate the history of the Judges. What, now, does Lord Hervey do? He brings forward a number of arguments, in which the point in question—the credibility of the representation in the book of Joshua—is assumed as proved. He points to the circumstance that chapters i. 1 to ii. 5 precede the account of Joshua's death in chapter ii. 8. He calculates that from chapter ii. 8 to chapter i. 1, each following verse presupposes the purport of the preceding; from which it appears as clear as noon day that the enquiry made of Jehovah, in chapter i. 1, is chronologically earlier than the rest, and

thus also than the death of Joshua. But meanwhile, it stands distinctly written in chapter i. 1, "It came to pass after the death of Joshua," &c. No matter! The text is without doubt corrupt: the mode of emendation alone is uncertain. Perhaps it should stand, "It came to pass after the death of Moses," &c. All difficulty disappears at once. Or, let chapter i. 1<sup>a</sup> be connected with chapter iii. 7, and chapters i. 1<sup>b</sup> to iii. 6 be regarded as a passage wrongly interpolated here.

From such wanton mutilation of the text we, negative and unbelieving critics, shrink. But the apologists look upon every thing as permitted, if thereby the difficulties are only removed. In the introduction to the book of Judges, from which my last specimen was borrowed, the figures are treated with equal freedom. The duration of the period of the Judges is reckoned at 150 or 160 years; the accuracy of Judges xi. 26, and 1 Kings vi. 1, is simply denied; the mention made of the duration of the oppressions, and of the years during which the individual Judges ruled, is regarded *comme non avenue*. How any one who professes to maintain the credibility of Judges can venture upon such things, almost surpasses our comprehension. But the finest thing is that, at the conclusion, a plaster is applied to the wound. The table composed by Keil—with the help of the well-known synchronisms—furnishes the proof that all the numbers in Judges, chap. xi. 26, and 1 Kings vi. 1, included, are perfectly in order. The reader may thus in any case be at ease, whether the Egyptian chronology is confirmed by further research, (in which case he throws the Old Testament figures *quam simplicissime* overboard), or whether it is not (because then he has in these figures all that he can desire).

[Professor Kuenen has, at my request, given a fuller explanation of the commentator's procedure in reference to the point just referred to, which I insert here. Bishop Hervey, he writes, holds the num-

bers in 1 Kings vi. 1, Judges xi. 26, and elsewhere in that book, to be corrupt, and thus to be rejected. But after having said, and supported, this, he lays before his readers the table composed by Keil (which is to be found in his "Commentary on Judges," p. 289, English translation). This table is intended to show that the figures in 1 Kings vi. 1 and Judges xi. 26, are accurate, and harmonize with the numbers in the book of Judges. With this view, Keil assumes that in that book the periods described are not always consecutive, but sometimes the same period is twice presented, namely, when the writer first narrates the history of the Transjordanic tribes, and then that of Israel to the west of that river. Thus Judges x.-xii. run parallel with Judges xiii.-xvi. (*i.e.*, the events described in these two sets of chapters respectively, are contemporaneous). This is an arbitrary, purely harmonistic supposition (as is shown more in detail in my "Historical and Critical Enquiry," &c., vol. i. p. 219 f).\*

\* [From this work I quote the following details: "Starting from the 480 years which, according to 1 Kings vi. 1, elapsed between the exodus from Egypt and the commencement of the building of the temple, some have endeavoured to reduce the data regarding the duration of the period of the Judges by supposing that some of these rulers were contemporary with each other. It is true that the book of Judges itself gives some support to this supposition; but (1) it does not appear where and how it ought to be applied; and (2) the uncertainty of the round numbers (40 and 80) is not thereby removed. Besides, the justness of the calculation which forms the basis of 1 Kings vi. 1 is itself subject to doubt; above all, because it cannot be made to harmonize with the genealogies which extend over this period. An impartial investigation thus leads to the conclusion that the chronology of the Hebrew history down to Eli and Samuel, and even to the disruption of the kingdom after Solomon's death, is uncertain, except in so far as its correctness is guaranteed by the history of the nations who came into contact with Israel (the Egyptians and Assyrians.)" In a note the author gives some account of the attempts made to abridge the period of the Judges, by the supposition that some of these governors were contemporaries. "Thus Keil

Now, Bishop Hervey takes over Keil's table *without approving of it*; but evidently in order to be, as it were, safe in all eventualities; or to quiet the reader who might have a difficulty in rejecting the biblical figures. This is what I have, in the text, disapproved. One of two things is plain. Either (1), Keil's method and table are good: in that case they should also (Einl. § 49) makes the Judges follow each other up to Jair inclusive (x. 3-5), and then regards the periods of the oppression by the Ammonites (x. 8), and of the Judges Jephthah (xii. 7), Ebzan (xii. 9), Elon (xii. 11), Abdon (xii. 14), as contemporaneous with that of the forty years' oppression by the Philistines (xiii. 1), within which the twenty years of Samson's rule (xv. 20; xvi. 31) are also made to fall. This calculation rests on a misunderstanding of the evident intention of the writer, who, although (x. 6-18) he speaks also of the Philistines, yet certainly does not mean the forty years (xiii. 1) to begin to be reckoned from Jair's death. (See above, sect. 31, note 2.) Others hold the data from Othniel to Ehud to be consecutive, and refer the figures which follow partly to the northern, partly to the transjordanic, and partly to the southern tribes, thereby supposing that it was only under Samuel that the entire nation was again united. Far better founded is the hypothesis of Hoekstra (*Chronology of the 480 years*; *Godg. Bijdr.*, 1856, 1-24). He assumes properly only two sets of contemporaneous periods, 1st, that of Jabin and Barak (Judges iv., v.) as contemporary with the rest following on the deliverance by Ehud; and this on the ground of Judges iv. 1, where mention is made, not of the end of that rest, but of Ehud's death. But according to v. 14, Benjamin also took part in the contest against Jabin; from this tribe was Ehud sprung: must not therefore the rest of eighty years under Ehud's rule have been at an end when Barak came forward? The second instance is that of Samson (Eli and Samuel), with the forty years mentioned in xiii. 1. But in ch. xiii. 5, where Samson's approaching birth is foretold, the fact of Israel being ruled by the Philistines is not announced, but supposed. According to the intention of the writer Samson did not fill the office of Judge during, much less at the beginning of, the forty years of oppression, but only after its close. Let it not be objected that according to all these calculations the most perfect harmony is brought about between the chronology of the book of Judges and 1 Kings vi. 1. Their great mutual difference, while the result is the same, shews that Bertheau (p. xviii.) has rightly disapproved the entire method."—J.M.]



be unreservedly followed; or, (2), they are of no value: and then they can be of no service, in case Bishop Hervey's own explanation is judged to be inadmissible. The Bishop himself certainly reasoned otherwise, and in the following way, as regards the accounts in the Bible (not as concerns the *readings*, but the *accounts themselves*): every thing is in any case correct: if this is not made manifest by the one process, it will be so by the other: if my view is not just, then Keil's will be the true one].

Professor Rawlinson, too, has convinced himself that the numbers in the Old Testament offer no difficulty: how readily may errors have crept into them! See "Introduction to the two books of Kings," p. 475 f. They can, also, very well be later additions, *e.g.*, the troublesome synchronisms of the kings of Israel and Judah. In the explanation of 2 Kings which is to follow afterwards, a formidable use is made, as is well-known, especially in ch. xviii.-xx., of the freedom to deal with figures at pleasure. And this by a writer who otherwise holds strongly enough to whatever the text of the Holy Scripture tells him, and—to name one small matter—ventures to deduce from 1 Kings xvii. 18, that the title "man of God" was in use in Phœnicia also.

But I must be brief, and therefore will only add a couple of remarks on 1 and 2 Samuel, and the Introduction to these books. Here, we immediately come upon the following bold assertion: "There are no contradictions or disagreement of any kind (*N.B.*) in the statements of the books of Samuel, as compared with each other, or (*N.B.*) with the books of Chronicles. The only appearance of two different accounts of the same event being given is to be found in 1 Sam. xxiv. compared with xxvi., where see notes. The other instances given by de Wette have no real existence. See notes on 1 Sam. xvi. 21, xxvii. 2," &c. After reading this, one naturally begins with consulting the notes on 1 Sam. xxiv. and xxvi. That on 1 Sam. xxvi.

1, specifies no less than thirteen points of coincidence between the two narratives, and concludes that they most probably represent the same fact. Excellent. We expect now to see the points of difference pointed out, or, if these are supposed to present themselves to view with sufficient distinctness, then to learn the result, which naturally cannot be favourable to the credibility, either of both the accounts, or of one of the two. Nothing of all this. It seems as if Lord Hervey has failed to remark that the two accounts, in spite of the thirteen points, differ *toto coelo*, and therefore regards all apology or further explanation as superfluous. Only he offers us some proposals for a modified interpretation of this or that particular, the one as improbable as the other, ending with the last refuge of harmonistics: "If we further suppose that one narrative relates fully some incidents on which the other is silent, there will remain no discrepancy of any importance" (p. 351).

In this one case the premisses of the newer criticism are recognized as true—and the inevitable conclusions avoided. In every other case, Lord Hervey sees a chance of denying the premisses themselves. Sometimes he does not esteem this to be necessary, and passes by the difficulty in silence, for example, in the notes to 1 Sam. xiii. 11-14, and xv. 23 ff; in those on 1 Sam. viii.; x. 17-27, compared with 1 Sam. ix. 1 to x. 16. Elsewhere we find him employing the well-known, and repeatedly refuted, attempts at explanation. So, for example, the connection between 1 Sam. x. 8 and xiii. 8-13, is denied in opposition to the evidence; the conflict between 1 Sam. vii. 13, and ix. 16, is acknowledged, and afterwards disguised with well chosen words; the appointment of David to be Saul's armour-bearer, in 1 Sam. xvi. 22, is placed after the combat with Goliath, and in this way the discrepancy between 1 Sam. xvi. 21, 22, and xvii. 55-58, is explained away. "The theory"—so it is said in p. 317—"of two conflicting traditions being followed here and in chap. xvii., is

very unsatisfactory in every point of view." Why? I pray. Unsatisfactory for dogmatic prejudice, but in every other respect perfectly natural, and in harmony with all the phenomena.

Where Lord Hervey takes his own course, he treats us to singular hypotheses. In the introduction to Samuel we are assured that the writer, after having related Saul's coronation (1 Sam xi. 14, 15) and stated the age of the new king (xiii. 1) leaps over twenty or thirty years of his reign, and communicates to us an event belonging to its last quarter. We open chapter xiii., and find no trace of so remarkable a hiatus between verses 1 and 2. What is more; at the conclusion of the narrative which begins chap. xiii. 2, we read (chap. xiv. 47): "So Saul took the kingdom over Israel,"—which thus, according to Lord Hervey, will have occurred twenty or thirty years after his coronation! In the notes we learn that during all this time, he was only nominally king, in consequence of the supremacy of the Philistines. "There is not the slightest indication from the words whether this 'taking of the kingdom' occurred soon, or many years, after Saul's anointing at Gilgal" (p. 309). Indeed, "not the slightest indication." Only it is here left out of sight that there are some things which are self-evident. What it was that led the commentator to this most singular view, he tells us himself. Saul is called in chap. ix. 2, a youth, and appears in chapters xiii., xiv., as the father of a full grown son: therefore, between 1 Sam. ix. and xiii., many years have elapsed. Throughout, we find assumed the thing that was to be proved—but at the same time cannot be proved—that the narratives proceed from one hand, or at least, are all without exception deserving of credit.

As regards the text of the books of Samuel, the introduction expresses a comparatively favourable judgment. "There are," we read in p. 246, "a few manifest corruptions of the text, such as the falling out of the

numerals in 1 Sam. xiii. 1; the numerals in 1 Sam. vi. 19; 2 Sam. xv. 7; the putting Michal instead of Merab, 2 Sam. xxi. 8; the corruption of the names of Jasobeam, 2 Sam. xxiii. 8; and of some of the other mighty men in the same list, the names Isbi-benob and Jaare-oregim, in 2 Sam. xxi. 16-19; and perhaps some others." I do not deny that these words strongly raised my expectations: could Lord Hervey see a chance of explaining satisfactorily the masoretic text of Samuel, except in these few passages? Great disappointment awaited me. The deviations from the Masora which in his notes he either esteems to be absolutely necessary, or strongly recommends, are very numerous. (See, for example, 1 Sam. i. 24, ii. 10; 29; vi. 4, 18, 19, &c., &c.) Still yet they are not numerous enough. In the case of 1 Sam. xiv. 18, the writer might safely have been decided, instead of offering a choice between the true reading and that of the text; in 1 Sam. xiv. 41, he should have consulted and followed the LXX, &c., &c. But why, then,—in the words of the introduction quoted above—is the state of things described in general terms as far more favourable than, on investigation of particulars, proves to be correct? We have here, in reality, the same fault into which the apologetic commentators are always falling anew. Their judgment regarding the whole is not the combined outcome of what the study of the particulars has presented. It (their judgment) has been determined beforehand. It controls the study, or remains unchanged, in spite of the results which this study offers. It is, in short, a prejudice, a foregone conclusion. Who can free them from it?—(*Theologisch Tijdschrift for May 1873.*)

### VOLUME III.

Since the first difficulties connected with the issue of the "Speaker's Commentary" have been overcome, the work goes prosperously forward. The third volume

now lies before us. The whole of it is written by Professor G. Rawlinson, of Oxford, and embraces the books of 2 Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. What sort of exegesis is here offered, what kind of criticism is here practised, what description of apologetics is here carried out, is known to the reader from our previous notices ("Theologisch Tijdschrift" for January 1872, and May 1873). In order to characterize this volume in particular, it will suffice to touch upon a few points.

The stand-point occupied by the expositor of the Old Testament, can at once, and safely, be made out from the manner in which he judges of the books of Chronicles. The author of these books is an individual with sharply defined outlines of character. His conceptions of persons and things can throughout be compared with those of earlier writers. The difficulties which this comparison reveals are palpable, and have, besides, been repeatedly presented to view. If any one shows that he has no eye to detect the unhistorical element in the Chronicles,\* we may, without exaggeration, affirm that such a person is stone-blind on Biblical ground. Now, Professor Rawlinson cannot escape this judgment. He has not, it is true, made himself acquainted with K. H. Graf's dissertation, "The Book of Chronicles as an historical source," ('Historical books of the Old Testament,' pp. 114-247,) *i.e.*, with the most thorough and excellent discussion of this subject,—but he has read de Wette's Introduction, and Theodore Parker's additions to that work. He has not, therefore, lacked guidance. Yet, in spite of this, he maintains—with the single exception which will be referred to further on—the complete credibility of the writer of the Chronicles. How is this possible? This question puzzles us, until we have learned the

\* [Compare the Bishop of Natal's recently published "Lectures on the Pentateuch and the Moabite Stone," Lecture xxiv., "The fictions of the Chronicler."—J. M.]

method which Rawlinson pursues. Then we are puzzled no more, because the method explains the thing at once. In the introduction to the Chronicles (Vol. iii., pp. 155 ff.) the ordinary questions regarding the title, the object, the author, the sources, of these books, and their relation to the other books of the Old Testament, are handled. We there already find one and another thing that justly creates astonishment, especially in section 5, on the Sources. Bertheau's investigation of this subject (Chronicles, pp. xxxii. ff; and my own Historical Critical Enquiry, i. 306 f.) appears entirely to have escaped Rawlinson's attention: at least, he neither adopts nor controverts it. But we leave these and other particulars, and turn to section 10, 'Authenticity of the history.' After some introductory remarks, the writer ranges the charges brought against the writer of Chronicles in three groups. He is said, 1st, to contradict himself; 2d, to give accounts which conflict with other books of the Old Testament; and 3rd, to commit errors arising from ignorance or misapprehension of his predecessors. This is the first application of the maxim *divide et impera*. The second consists in this, that the doubts which belong to one of these groups are one after another taken in hand, and—refuted? No, not that, but answered by some hypothesis excogitated in favour of the writer of Chronicles, which may, in a certain degree, claim to be listened to, so long as it is kept isolated, but which at once appears to be inadmissible when we observe that time after time such a supposition must be called in and employed, in order to the acquittal, *taliter qualiter*, of the Chronicle writer. The result is that the four inconsistencies, the eighteen or nineteen instances of contradiction, and the six errors, are one after another set aside, with a very few exceptions, which are too unimportant to prejudice the historian in the eyes of his readers, and on the other hand, place the impartiality of the commentator in a clear light.

Often, too, the exceptions are merely apparent, because the fault is ascribable not to the author, but to his copyists. In this way, Professor Rawlinson gives an account of the discrepancy between the figures in 1 Chronicles xxi. 5, and 2 Samuel xxiv. 9; in 1 Chronicles xxi. 25, and 2 Samuel xxiv. 24. In this manner, he thinks, that he has fulfilled his task as a critic. . . . Is it not clear as noon-day that in this way truth cannot be found? That so the peculiarities of the Chronicle-writer *must* be obliterated?

But, let us stop a little to consider the so-called corruptions of the text, which are sometimes caught at as the last means of extrication from a difficulty. The possibility of errors of transcription, particularly in the figures, cannot of course, in the abstract, be denied. But the manner in which Professor Rawlinson makes use of it for his purpose, is, in the highest degree, arbitrary and uncritical. The study of the Books of Chronicles in their totality shows, namely, that their author throughout presents us with large figures, not only when he determines the strength of the Israelitish armies and the number of the slain in battle, but also when he communicates the amount of sums of money. We have thus to do not with a single phenomenon standing by itself, but with a strongly pronounced peculiarity of this Jewish historian. See only my "Historical Critical Enquiry," &c., i. 323 f. What now, does Professor Rawlinson do? When there is a possibility of maintaining the exaggerated data, he maintains them: if not, then the text is declared to be corrupt. This last course is followed, for example, in 2 Chron. xvii. 14-18; 1 Chron. xxii. 4; xxix. 4. Everywhere else, by the help of reasonings, which may not see the light, the author of Chronicles is acquitted. Can such procedure be vindicated? Does not the dogmatic prejudice which leads to such a misconception of the requirements of the true method of criticism, stand condemned before the tribunal of science?

The value of the harmonizing process which is

applied in the notes to Chronicles, does not require to be illustrated by examples. The simple fact, that in no passage is any disagreement acknowledged to exist between this book and those of Samuel and Kings, speaks with sufficient distinctness. Here and there the difficulty is not solved even in appearance, but simply passed over in silence. The difficulties connected with the narrative in 1 Chron. xvi. 7 ff. are well-known, and, one would say, of sufficient importance to be at least mentioned, and judged of. For Professor Rawlinson they seem to have no existence. With the greatest possible naivety he calls the hymn which is there communicated "apparently a thanksgiving service composed for the occasion out of psalms previously existing." Indeed, it is no doubt of subordinate importance that those psalms, if not all, yet nearly all, are post-exilic!

But where should I end if I should seek to characterize completely the critical work of Professor Rawlinson? Any one who desires more, has only to open the book. Let him not omit, then, to consult the notes on 2 Kings xviii. to xx., where, on one hand, the truth of the Assyrian accounts, and on the other, that of the Biblical narrative, is maintained—of course, again at the expense of the copyists, who, in 2 Kings xviii. 13, have put the 14th for the 29th year of Hezekiah; and further, by the supposition that 2 Kings xx., is chronologically prior to 2 Kings xviii. and xix., and that this was not unknown to the author himself.\* Let him, then, also consider the

\* I avail myself of this opportunity to draw attention to a dissertation of A. H. Sayce, on 2 Kings xviii. to xx., in the *Theological Review* for 1873, pp. 15-31. The writer judges that the expeditions of Sargon and Sanherib are confounded and mixed up with one another by the author of Kings, but that at the same time his sources, in which these expeditions were duly distinguished, may still be distinctly pointed out in his narrative. The same scholar treats in the same journal, pp. 364-377, the Chaldean account of the deluge discovered by G. Smith.



introductions to Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, and the notes on the most important passages of these books. They made upon me a peculiarly painful impression, e.g., the notes on Ezra iv., where Ahasuerus is identified with Cambyses, and Artasahsta with the Pseudo-Smerdis. But why adduce individual examples? The whole method is utterly defective. Rawlinson repeatedly requests attention to the circumstance that the negative critics bring no objections against the credibility of Ezra and Nehemiah, because in these books no miracles are related. This is, in point of fact, incorrect: against more than one particular in Ezra i., ii. f., vii. 12 f., Nehemiah viii. f., just objections are alleged, among which some are of great importance. Rawlinson, nevertheless, was not aware of them, and had, consequently, full freedom to slumber. For when the "rationalists" are not under arms and in the vicinity, the "believers" need not mount guard. They have nothing more to do than to repel assaults. That there is any thing to investigate in reference to the Biblical narratives; that, for instance, the chapters which have just been referred to, on careful study present to the expositor all sorts of problems—this cannot once occur to their minds. The credibility of the books stands fast *à priori*: so long as it continues uncontested, or, at least, so long as they have no cognizance of its being contested—they have, as critics, no further duty to perform. They may confine themselves to the illustration of the text of the narrative. This, then, is done in the notes to Ezra and Nehemiah. But what does this avail to the reader? In what respect does all this learning, regarding Persian words, for example, bring him any further? It is, indeed, in the highest degree saddening, as I expressed myself on a former occasion, that so exceptionally fine an opportunity to instruct the public as the "Speaker's Commentary" offers, should be so badly used, or rather, so greatly misused. Inspired by the best intentions, but governed by their system, the writers dispute that

which they ought to complete and to improve, and they shut out from the sight of their readers the light by means of which it would be possible for them to value and love the Old Testament. Would that they could at length learn to perceive that they have disowned their true friends, and against their own will have become the antagonists of truth and piety!—(*Theologisch Tijdschrift for Sept. 1873*).

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*Note on p. 7, line 21.*

[ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφυ,  
 κού ποικίλων δέι τᾶνδιχ' ἐρμηνευμάτων·  
 ἔχει γὰρ αὐτὰ καιρόν· ὁ δ' ἄδικος λογος  
 νοσῶν ἐν αὐτῷ φαρμάκων δέεται σοφῶν.

*Euripides, Phoenissae, 469 ff.*

“The language of truth is simple ; and a just cause requires no subtle expositions, for it has an inherent propriety. But an unjust claim, being in itself infirm, stands in need of artificial supports, applied with skill.”

“The words of truth will ever simple be ;  
 And justice, strong, scorns aid from subtlety.  
 But wrongful claims, by nature sick and weak,  
 The help of far-sought strengthening drugs must seek ”  
 J. M.]